

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 1-104 were pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104 are independent. Claims 105-158 have been withdrawn from consideration. In the Final Office Action dated December 30, 2002, Claims 1-104 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 and §102(b). Following this response, Claims 1-104 remain in this application. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

In the Final Office Action dated December 30, 2002, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-104 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104 have been amended to further define and clarify the invention and do not narrow the claimed subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that these amendments overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

II. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-104 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,667,078 ("*Walach*"), U.S. Patent No. 5,249,687 ("*Rosenbaum*"), and by admitted prior art. Applicants respectfully traverse

this rejection because neither *Walach*, *Rosenbaum*, nor any admitted prior art teach or suggest all elements of the claimed invention.

The Examiner stated that no parts of the claims after the conditional recitations were considered. Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104 as amended have been placed in better form for consideration in response to the above mentioned rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104 as amended include recitations not previously considered by the Examiner and that these recitations make these claims patentably distinguishable over the cited art. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104 as amended patentably distinguish the present invention over the cited art, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104.

Dependent Claims 2-8, 10-16, 20-30, 32-42, 46-59, 61-74, 78-82, 84-88, 92- 96, and 98-102 are also allowable at least for the reasons above regarding independent Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104, and by virtue of their respective dependencies upon independent Claims 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 31, 43, 44, 45, 60, 75, 76, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 97, 103, and 104. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) of dependent Claims 2-8, 10-16, 20-30, 32-42, 46-59, 61-74, 78-82, 84-88, 92- 96, and 98-102.

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III. Conclusion

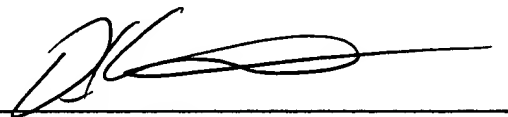
In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Office Action identified above, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in that Office Action. The claims may include other elements that are neither shown, taught, nor suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this amendment and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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